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ABSTRACT

Subjects were divided into three groups. Group 1 took the entire Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS). Group 2 rated the individual items from the EPPS using the original definitions of social desirability and personal desirability. Group 3 rated the individual items from the EPPS using redefinitions of social and personal desirability. Results indicated fewer sex differences today than in the 1950's. There were no differences in item scale value under any of the definitions of social or personal desirability. Results may show a need for restandardization of the EPPS. (Author)

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AN INVESTIGATION OF SEX DIFFERENCES AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY IN THE EDWARDS PERSONAL PREFERENCE SCHEDULE

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Edwards (1957) found that responses to personality inventories were largely due to the response bias of Social Desirability. That is, subjects tended to respond true to favorable statements and false to unfavorable statements about themselves. In developing the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS), Edwards (1959) attempted to control for this type of response to items by using a forced-choice inventory. To do this, he used 135 different items paired in 210 different ways (each item relating to one of 15 personality variables). The A and B members were supposedly matched for social desirability or undesirability (on a nine-point continuum).

There have been questions raised as to whether individuals respond to items in terms of their social desirability or in terms of personal desirability. Goodstein and Heilbrun (1959) asked students to judge the statements of the EPPS on personal desirability rather than social desirability. They transformed these ratings to the social desirability scale values of the items and found a significant relationship (r=.90) between personal and social desirability.

Questions have also concerned the social desirability of the items <u>after</u> they had been paired. Corah, et. al. (1957) found that since the members were not chosen with equal frequency after they had been paired, the items did not

have equivalent social desirability values. Other evidence has not supported the ab ve finding (Edwards, et. al., 1959; Kelleher, 1958; Navran and Stauffacher, 1954).

The EPPS has been normed on two groups of subjects; college students and adult household heads. Sex differences were found for both groups with males scoring significantly higher on Achievement, Autonomy, Dominance, Heterosexuality and Aggression. Females scored significantly higher on Deference, Affiliation, Intraception, Succorance, Abasement, Nurturance, and Change. Other research has supported these results (Allen and Dallek, 1957; Klett, 1957). It was also found that scores on EPPS profiles were affected by culture and group association (Klett, 1957; Klett and Yaukey, 1959; Lovaas, 1958). Differences were found between hospital psychiatric patients and American college students (Klett, 1957). There were also differences in profiles between American college students and Near Eastern, Nisei, and Norwegian students (Lovaas, 1958).

The present investigation was an attempt to determine if the original college norms, and sex differences found in the EPPS are appropriate now. Redefinitions of social desirability and personal desirability were posed and an attempt was made to determine whether ratings of EPPS statements were different under the new definitions. Personal desirability, originally defined as being what one would judge to be desirable in oneself, was redefined as being what traits "you, as an individual" would judge as being personally desirable or undesirable in others. Individuals rated the statements for personal desirability in reference to being part of a "group", where all members would discuss their problems. Social desirability, originally defined as being what one would judge to be desirable in others, was redefined to be what traits an individual believes society, at large, would judge as being socially desirable.

Procedure

Five inventories were randomly administered to 292 undergraduates at the University of Pittsburgh during the Winter Term, 1972. Subjects were divided into three groups. Group I was given the EPPS. Group II was given two inventories composed of the unpaired EPPS items, and rated in terms of the original definitions of social and personal desirability. Group III was also given two inventories with the unpaired EPPS items but rated these items in terms of the two new definitions.

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis stated that sex differences in the EPPS profiles would be different in 1972. It was also hypothesized (2) that ratings of the items under the original definitions would be highly related and (3) that ratings of the items with the two new definitions would be less highly related. The last hypothesis stated that the correlation of the pairs of statements in the EPPS would be lower than that found originally.

Results

In order to test the first hypothesis, Ss taking the entire EPPS were divided on the basis of sex. Since scores on the EPPS are ipsative in nature, one variable, Endurance, was eliminated in order to allow for more independence. Univariate analyses of variance were performed on the data, and significant differences were found on four variables ($p < .05$): Intraception, Succorance, Dominance and Change. These differences were in the same direction as in the original sample. Results indicated that there were fewer sex differences in 1972 than originally found.

To determine the relationship between social and personal desirability, hypoth ses (2) and (3), a three-way repeated measures analysis of variance was performed on the data from Groups II and III. Results indicated no significant differences between either the Groups of subjects, the Forms used (definitions) or the interaction of Group and Form. Significant differences at the .05 level were found for the four sources of variation that are discussed below.

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Insert Table 1 about here

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1. There were significant differences, main effects, for the 14 separate EPPS variable ($p < .0001$).

2. The interaction of Groups of people and Variables was significant ($p < .0001$).

3. The interaction of Forms of the inventory and Variables was significant ($p < .001$).

4. The interaction of Groups of people, Forms of the inventory, and Variables was significant ($p < .001$).

These results supported the second hypothesis but did not support the third hypothesis.

An intraclass correlation, performed between the mean ranking for each of the A-B pairs of statements was .81, which is similar to that stated by Edwards (.85) in the EPPS Manual, and the results did not support the final hypothesis.

Discussion

The four variables with significant sex differences, showed the differences to be in the same direction as they were in the original study (Edwards, 1959). Reversals for females occurred on the variables of Deference, Autonomy,

Affiliation, Abasement, Heterosexuality, and Aggression, making present females similar to both groups of males. There were similar changes for males (Achievement and Nurturance), giving present males scores similar to the two groups of females. The results of this investigation do not support the original findings of Allen and Dallek, 1957; Edwards, 1959; Klett, 1957. The present finding may suggest that there should be cautious interpretations of EPPS profiles of College students when used for counseling purposes. It may also suggest restandardization and norming of the EPPS if it is to be used for counseling or research purposes in the future.

These findings may also indicate that there have been some significant changes for college males and females since the 1950's. More women must work to support families, and they are demanding better jobs, higher wages, increased education, and child-care centers for their children. With opportunities opening in terms of education and professional jobs, the expectations and roles for college females are changing. It seems likely, then, that there would be a change in profiles on the EPPS, since females are adopting those values which our society stresses as important for self-sufficiency and achievement. It is highly probable that college students today would have similar needs for Achievement and Autonomy and that males would also exhibit those needs once specified as feminine.

The results also indicated that the different instructions used for rating the statements did not affect the overall ratings of the variables on any of the Forms. The redefinition of social desirability is inadequate for determining whether or not social desirability can be separated from personal desirability.

In addition, a comparison of the means of each variable on the four forms indicated that 13 of the variables have a mean scale value between 4.9 and 7.5. Aggression is the only variable which has a mean Social Desirability Scale

Value of four or less. Mean SDSV's for each of the items was then computed to determine whether or not there was a spread of SDSV's from one to nine, over 135 different statements. Mean SDSV's for the items fell between 4.14 and 7.85. Seven of the items had mean SDSV's lower than 4.14. It appears, then, that most of the items have similar desirability for the Ss in this research. One explanation for the lack of significant differences with the different definitions may be that most of the items were of similar desirability to the Ss. That is, the instructions did not matter because the individual items were not very different to the raters. This result may also have occurred because of the test-taking attitudes of the Ss. They may have been responding to the middle few numbers on the SD scale rather than to the individual items. However, the low ratings for the items related to Aggression seems to indicate that, at least for some items, the Ss were responding to the content of the item.

The intraclass correlation of the A-B pairs of statements was fairly high, .81, and was similar to the original finding. Thus, the results do not support the final hypothesis. Since it was found that most of the items had similar SDSV's, it would seem likely that the paired items would be fairly well matched for scale value. The high intraclass correlation may be due, then, to similarity of item desirability rather than to an attempt to match items that range in value from highly undesirable to highly desirable.

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TABLE 1

Anova Summary Table

Source of variation	df	MS	F
Between	199		
+A	1	0.5775	0.0705
Subj w. groups	198	8.1895	
Within	5400		
++B	1	2.3962	2.3486
AB	1	0.3438	0.3370
B x subj w. groups	198	1.0202	
+++C	13	341.1190	280.3641*
AC	13	4.8973	4.0250*
C x subj w. groups	2574	1.2167	
BC	13	5.5779	16.6703*
ABC	13	3.9383	11.7700*
BC x subj w. groups	2574	0.3346	
Total	5599		

\+ A represents the Sets of people

++ B represents the Forms used

+++ C represents the 14 variables

*$p < .05$ (all were signivicant at .0001)